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POLLUTION LAW IN THE WORKS, SC PUTS LOKUR PANEL ON HOLD

Monday's decision by the apex court came after Centre said it's creating a permanent body to tackle air pollution in Delhi-NCR

NEW LEGISLATION IN THREE-FOUR DAYS: CENTRE

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta told the court that the Centre will come out with a comprehensive legislation to address air pollution in Delhi, including the issue of stubble burning in neighbouring Punjab, Haryana and UP. He didn't spell out details of the new law, but said it will be brought in three to four days, and will put in place a permanent body to tackle air pollution | P7

PEOPLE ARE CHOKING, SAYS CJI BOBDE

- Welcoming the proposal, CJI S A Bobde said, "The only issue is people are choking because of pollution, and it must be curbed"
- On October 16, the court had appointed a one-man panel comprising retired SC judge Madan B Lokur to monitor steps taken by govts of Punjab, Haryana, UP to prevent stubble burning

Oct 29
WHEN THE COURT WILL HEAR THE MATTER AGAIN

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

A DIM DASARA

Abhimanyu (54) carries the 750-kg golden howdah with the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari during the Jamboo Savari on Vijayadashami day in Mysuru on Monday. Amidst the lurking fear of Covid-19, the cultural hub of Karnataka witnessed a scaled-down version of Dasara this year, with simple celebrations confined to the Mysuru Palace premises | UDAYSHANKAR S | P5

India, US to ink 2 key deals today

Jaishankar, Rajnath hold talks with Pompeo, Esper ahead of the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

PUSHKAR BANAKAR & MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

Mike Pompeo

Mark Esper

SETTING the stage for the signing of two crucial defence and information-sharing deals in the third 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Mark Esper held bilateral talks with their respective counterparts, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, here on Monday.

"The two ministers (Singh and Esper) reviewed bilateral defence cooperation spanning military-to-military cooperation, secure communication systems and information-sharing, defence trade and industrial issues, and also discussed ways to take bilateral cooperation forward. The two ministers expressed satisfaction that agreement of BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for geo-spatial cooperation) will be signed during the visit," read a Ministry of Defence statement released after the meeting.

The top US officials are in India for the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue during which BECA and MISTA (Maritime Information Sharing Technical Arrangement) will be signed.

While BECA gives India access to accurate US satellite data for navigation and precision military targets, MISTA will help in enhanced information and intelligence sharing between the two countries.

The 2+2 dialogue comes amid border tensions with China. The US has condemned China's aggressive actions along the LAC and the South China Sea and the two US officials will likely be canvassing their anti-China stance when they visit Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia on their way back to the US. CONTINUED ON: P7

EXPRESS READ

Kangana lashes out at Uddhav

Mumbai: Hitting out at Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray for his comments at a rally, actor Kangana Ranaut on Monday described him as 'the worst product of nepotism' and said her state Himachal Pradesh is the land of the gods, not 'ganja fields'. Kangana has been vocal about her criticism of the Maharashtra government's handling of the probe into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

Coal scam: 3-year jail for ex-minister

New Delhi: A Delhi court Monday awarded 3-year jail term to former Union minister Dilip Ray in a coal scam case pertaining to irregularities in the allocation of a Jharkhand block in 1999, saying white collar crimes are "more dangerous" than ordinary ones because of the "damages inflicted on public morale". Special Judge Bharat Parashar also awarded 3-year jail terms to two senior officials of the ministry at that time.

Centre to state: Send data on Covid health workers by weekend

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

IN a mammoth preparation across the country for the much-awaited vaccination against Covid-19, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) has sent a circular to the Departments of Health and Family Welfare of all states and Union Territories, asking them to collect data of all frontline healthcare workers (FHWs) from government and private hospitals.

The Department of Health & Family Welfare, Karnataka, received the circular last weekend, which has been forwarded to all government and private hospitals, asking them to submit by this weekend the details of all healthcare workers, from Group D employees to top medical fraternity at their hospitals who are and have been on Covid duty, official sources said.

"The MoHFW is preparing a database of HCWs, defined as healthcare providers and other workers in healthcare settings (both government and private), who may be prioritised for receiving the Covid-19 vaccine," the letter from the Centre stated.

The vaccine will be administered to all the 1.3 billion Indians with frontline healthcare workers being on the top of the priority list.

India is hopeful of two vaccine candidates – Oxford University-AstraZeneca's 'Covishield' and the Russian 'Sputnik V' vaccine. P5

A health worker collects samples for testing at KR Market in Bengaluru on Monday | ASHISHRRISHNA HP

Relief for K'taka, as corona cases dip

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

FROM a high of over 8,000 to 10,000 Covid cases daily in August, September and until mid-October, the virus appears to be slowing down, at least for now, in Karnataka.

In a sign of relief to citizens, government and overburdened health infrastructure, Karnataka reported 3,130 cases on Monday, taking its tally up to 8,05,947. The positivity rate has been steadily declining from over 12 per cent in September to 10.82 per cent as of October 26.

Munish Moudgil, in charge of state Covid war room, said, "It is because of high testing that lower positivity rate and lower new daily cases happen and not in spite of high testing. The lesson we have learnt is that high daily testing is the way to beat Covid, particularly RT-PCR, which holds the key to identify, control and reduce Covid. Even when the positivity rate and new daily cases fall, we should continue with high daily testing. This will prevent the second wave."

CONTINUED ON: P5

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

10,947 Total Deaths
3,130 Positive cases on Monday
7,19,558 Total Discharges
8,05,947 TOTAL CASES

COVID IMPACT

Endosulfan victims face stipend delays

DIVYA CUTINHO @ Mangaluru

HUNDREDS of endosulfan victims are facing a hardship due to the irregular disbursal of monthly stipend amid the Covid-19 pandemic in Dakshina Kannada district. While victims with 60% and above deformities get a monthly stipend of ₹3,000, those with 25% and above deformities, get ₹1,500.

There are over 3,600 victims in Puttur, Belthangady, Sullia and other parts of the district who are entitled to various benefits from the government. Shridhar Gowda, a victim and president of Endosulfan Virodhi Horata Samiti of Kokkada, said that the monthly stipend is being disbursed irregularly. For many victims, it has been pending for months, he said.

"Officials say there are technical issues. It has been almost a year. Were they not able to fix the issues? With no stipend, no necessary facilities, how do these victims survive during this pandemic?" he asked. P5

'Cow slaughter law being misused'

SANA SHAKIL @ New Delhi

THE Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act is being "misused" to implicate innocent persons, the Allahabad High Court recently observed, putting the state's law enforcement machinery under intense scrutiny.

In a recent order, the single-judge bench of Justice Siddharth observed, "Act is being misused against innocent persons. Whenever any meat is recovered, it is normally shown as cow meat (beef) without getting it examined or analysed by the Forensic Laboratory."

In most cases under this law, meat is not sent for analysis and accused persons continue to be in jail for an offence they may not have committed, Justice Siddharth said. He added that offences under this law have a maximum sentence of seven years.

The court was hearing a bail application of one Rahmuddin, accused of cow slaughter and sale of beef under Sections 3, 5 and 8 of the Act. P7

NEET counselling from today

PEARL MARIA D'SOUZA @ Bengaluru

TO meet the November 30 deadline, the Karnataka Examination Authority (KEA) will hold counselling for engineering seats (CET) and medical seats, secured through the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), simultaneously.

KEA Director Venkat Raju confirmed to *TNIE* that the authority will begin counselling for engineering (CET) students after the first round of NEET counselling for its all-India quota. NEET counselling begins on Tuesday and the first list of the all-India quota is likely to come out between November 6 and 12.

Under normal circumstances, counselling for engineering seats begins after the medical seats are filled. This is because, each year, a number of medical aspirants leave their engineering seats after they get a confirmation for medical seats. This affects engineering colleges as a number of seats are left vacant as these withdrawals occur after the final date of admissions.

Despite the simultaneous arrangement this year, it will be a win-win for students and engineering colleges, said Raju. "Counselling will be done in such a way that students who want to go for medical seats can opt for them, while those who, unfortunately, do not get medical seats can go for engineering," he added. P5

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